



700.08 Special Response Team (SRT)

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POLICY

The Hendry County Sheriff's Office provide specialized services in support of any decoy operations, undercover surveillance/stakeouts, special events, dignitary protection, disturbances, emergencies, hostage, or search and rescue missions, if necessary.

PROCEDURE

A. Command and Control Structure

1. The Special Response Team (SRT) is commanded by a deputy sheriff with the rank of sergeant or above. When activated for an operation, the SRT Team Commander will report directly to the on-scene supervisor. The SRT Team Commander is responsible for deployment of the SRT Team, tactical decision making, and tactical resolution of the incident. The SRT Team Commander is subordinate to the Chief Deputy only in terms of **when** and if the tactical option will be initiated, not **how** it will be performed. All tactical plans will be provided to the Chief Deputy prior to their execution unless the incident dictates otherwise. Unless the SRT Team Commander relinquishes his/her control to another person outside the SRT Team, no other non-SRT Team member, who is not in a leadership position within the SRT Team, will attempt to direct, supervise, or control any element or member of the SRT Team, unless approved by the Sheriff or Chief Deputy.

B. Team Assignments and Positions

1. Commander: Will be appointed by the Sheriff or his designee.
2. Team Leaders: Will be designated by SRT Team Commander.
3. SRT Team Members: Deputy Sheriffs assigned to the SRT Team. Assignment to the SRT Team will be based on the criteria outlined Paragraph F.
4. Specialist Assignments: Tactical specialists such as snipers, sniper observer, Explosives Breacher /EOD and less lethal munitions specialists will be designated by the SRT Team Commander.
5. Negotiators: Will be selected through a review board process and subject to approval of the SRT Commander. The standards for negotiators will be unique to the negotiating team.

C. Activation Process

1. SRT Team activations take precedence over all other assignments within the agency. SRT Team members are assigned and subordinate to the SRT Team

Commander until the SRT Team Commander determines that the activation is over.

2. A deputy sheriff with the rank of sergeant or above has the authority to immediately activate the SRT team for any critical incident within jurisdictional boundaries. The activation will commence when the requesting supervisor contacts the SRT Team Commander and briefs him on the incident. This contact can be made through the Sheriff's Office Telecommunications Center. The Commander will then take responsibility for the conduct of the activation. When it is determined to be necessary, any deputy sheriff assigned to the SRT Team is authorized to initiate team activation.
3. The SRT Team is available to assist with any critical incident (as previously defined). Situations that are not specifically covered by this definition will exist, and it will be the decision of the on-scene supervisor to request SRT Team activation.
4. The SRT Team is available, with the approval of the SRT Team Commander, to any requesting law enforcement agency. When a request for the team is received, it shall be immediately forwarded to the SRT Team Commander who will determine if in fact the situation warrants the activation of the team.
5. Any division or unit within the agency may request the assistance of the SRT Team in planning or conducting appropriate operations. The division/unit commander, or their representative, will contact the SRT Team Commander with the request. The SRT Team Commander, if approving the request, will then follow the above described procedures for team activation. Applicable agency guidelines concerning the executions of search/arrest warrants will be adhered to when unit/division requests that the SRT Team serve a warrant.
6. The Negotiator is available to assist/support other units of the Sheriff's Office as well as other law enforcement agencies. If a requesting supervisor or agency requests the specific use of the Negotiators, the following procedure will be utilized.
7. The request for utilization of the Negotiators will immediately be reported to the SRT Team Commander. This can be done through the Telecommunications Center or through direct contact with the SRT Team Commander.
8. The Negotiators, the SRT Team Commander, and/or the Commander's designee will respond to the incident location.
9. The SRT Team Commander will assess the situation to determine if there exists a need for a tactical response from the SRT Team.
 - a. If it is determined that there is no need for a tactical response, the Negotiators will be deployed to assist with the incident. The SRT Team Commander and/or his designee will remain at the scene and monitor the progress until such time that the incident is concluded.
 - b. If it is determined that there is a need for a tactical response, the SRT Team Commander and/or his designee will initiate the activation according to the procedures outlined herein.

D. Hostage/Barricade Situations

1. Patrol Deputy Duties:
 - a. Except in the event of an in-progress violent situation, patrol deputies should not initiate tactical actions other than those necessary to protect the lives and safety of others.

- b. Make notification to patrol supervisor regarding the incident and circumstances.
 - c. Contain and isolate the incident scene to as small an area as is safe and practical by establishing a perimeter of containment. As time and resources permit, outer perimeter containment to control pedestrian and vehicular traffic should be established.
 - d. When possible and applicable, evacuate injured persons or those in immediate danger.
 - e. Evacuation of affected residents and businesses within sight and range of the suspect should be accomplished as soon as practical.
2. Patrol Supervisor Duties:
- a. Request activation of the SRT Team.
 - b. Assume command of the incident unless otherwise relieved by competent authority.
 - c. Ensure that the commander of the affected district has been notified.
 - d. Select an initial command post site (consideration should be given to location, accessibility, and safety).
 - e. Make provisions for recording personnel assignments and developing a chronological record of events.
 - f. If applicable, ensure that fire/rescue services are available at the command post area.
 - g. Provide a detailed briefing for the SRT Team Commander, including suspect's actions and personnel assignments.
3. High Risk Incident Commander Duties:
- a. Assume command of the incident.
 - b. Coordinate and direct the activities involved in the situation.
 - c. Maintain communications with all operational components involved.
 - d. Coordinate all media releases.
 - e. Ensure that further notifications in the chain of command are made.
 - f. Establish and maintain an outer perimeter.
 - g. Establish the appropriate chain of command for the incident.
 - h. Ensure that appropriate communications exist with all other agencies involved with the incident.
 - i. Identify logistical requirements and coordinate/delegate the appropriation of specific logistical items.
 - j. Request and place on stand-by appropriate fire and EMS personnel.
 - k. Ensure that at the conclusion of the incident, a thorough preliminary investigation is conducted.
4. SRT Team Commander Duties:
- a. Evaluate the situation to determine the SRT Team staffing and equipment needs.
 - 1. If the situation is a prolonged incident or beyond the capabilities of the SRT Team, the SRT Team Commander should notify other agencies and request their assistance in resolving the incident.
 - b. Formulate tactical resolution options and communicate these options to the High Risk Incident Commander.
 - c. Assume responsibility for the inner perimeter.
 - d. Coordinate the deployment of SRT Team personnel.

- e. Maintain contact with the High Risk Incident Commander.
 - f. Coordinate intelligence information and maintain communication throughout the event with the Negotiator.
 - 1. Ensure that primary and secondary negotiators have been assigned.
 - 2. Initiate appropriate intelligence gathering to provide information regarding the suspect(s), hostages, and/or location.
 - 3. Designate a location to interview witnesses, released hostages, and any other persons having pertinent information.
 - 4. Coordinate any professional assistance (psychiatrist, psychologist, etc.) or third party negotiator, if necessary.
 - g. Ensure that at the conclusion of the incident, appropriate briefings are conducted and that applicable after action reports are completed.
- E. Use of Force
- 1. The level of force used by officers will be consistent with agency policy and state statute.
- F. Selection Process
- 1. The SRT Team will select all prospective members from a valid selection roster created through applicant testing. Criteria for application will be based on the following: time in service of a certain length, satisfactory job performance in present and previous assignments, and satisfactory physical fitness levels. Testing will consist of SRT Team specific and validated tests.
 - a. Recruitment, Applications, Process Examinations
 - 1. Recruitment of candidates for SRT Team positions will be carried out through appropriate postings to ensure that all segments of the law enforcement divisions of the Sheriff's Office have an opportunity to apply and to be considered for such positions.
 - 2. Such positions should be posted at least two (2) months prior to the testing date.
 - 3. Applicants will be recruited on the basis of the minimum requirements established by the SRT Team.
 - a. Applicants must be currently assigned to a law enforcement operational unit within the Sheriff's Office.
 - b. Applicants must have successfully completed the road patrol Field Training and Evaluation Program.
 - c. Applicants must be off probation and have a minimum of two years of law enforcement experience.
 - d. The methods utilized to examine applicants may consist of any, all, or a combination of the following:
 - 1. Introduction letter
 - 2. Weapon proficiency testing
 - 3. Physical and written tests
 - 4. Oral interview
 - 5. Evaluation and rating of training and experience
 - 6. Quality of work and/or length of service
 - 7. Background investigation
 - 8. Polygraph examination
 - 9. Substance screening

10. Other criteria which have been determined to be a fair and impartial measure of an applicant's ability and fitness to perform the duties associated with the SRT Team

e. Any disciplinary action taken against an applicant will be reviewed by the SRT Team prior to acceptance of application.

b. All selections of personnel for assignment to the SRT Team will be subject to final approval by the Sheriff or his designee.

G. Leave of Absence

1. A SRT team member can be allowed up to twelve (12) months leave of absence. Any request for a leave of absence or an extension of an existing leave of absence will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. The following are acceptable criteria for requesting a leave of absence:

- a. Temporary medical disability
- b. Job transfers which do not allow or limit a SRT Team member's contact with agency members or availability for activation and training
- c. Long term specialty schools
- d. Military obligations
- e. Personal hardships

2. A team member may voluntarily withdraw from the team at any time, for any reason. This must include an inter-office memo to the Sheriff through chain of command. A team member may be removed from the team, without cause, when deemed necessary for the good of the team by a consensus of the leadership elements of the team and approval by the SRT Team Commander.

3. A team member who departs the team in good standing may request a reinstatement to the team by meeting the following criteria:

- a. A memorandum to the SRT Team commander requesting reinstatement.
- b. Approval by the Sheriff or his designee.
- c. Approval of the supervisory element of the team.
- d. Successful demonstration of proficiency in firearms and physical fitness standards testing.

H. Technical Support

1. The SRT Team Commander may, at his discretion and with the approval of the supervisory elements of the team, assign specific individuals to the team. This type of assignment will only be utilized for technical and medical support personnel.

These type of assignments include, but are not limited to:

- a. Tactical medical personnel
- b. Audio/video technicians
- c. Communication specialists
- d. Logistical specialists
- e. Drone Operator(s)

2. Eight hour technical support training is conducted once a month, generally on the second or fourth Thursdays of the month.

I. Training Standards

1. The SRT Team will conduct training a minimum of 16 hours per month. The SRT Team will train on appropriate subjects related to the mission of the SRT Team.

All training will be documented and training records will be maintained on file indefinitely.

2. The SRT Team will conduct an annual readiness exercise, unless a deployment occurred.
3. All training will be performance oriented and SRT Team task specific. Specific criteria will be set for firearms and physical fitness standards. The firearms and physical fitness criteria will be documented and maintained in the SRT Team files. Any changes in the curriculum will be justified in writing and will amend existing standards.
4. Firearms and physical fitness qualification testing will take place in the first quarter of each calendar year. Operational team members who fail to meet firearms or physical fitness standards shall be placed on a 60-day operational suspension. Members who are suspended for failure to meet standards must, after the imposed 60-day suspension period, demonstrate proficiency in firearms and physical fitness testing. Members who fail to demonstrate proficiency upon retesting shall be removed from the SRT Team. The SRT Team Commander may grant extensions to the 60-day suspension period in the case of extenuating circumstances.
5. Operational team members who fail either the firearms or physical fitness standards will only be provided **one** opportunity to retest during their tenure on the SRT Team.

J. Equipment Standards

1. The SRT Team will supply team members with at least the following safety equipment:
 - a. Ballistic helmet
 - b. Ballistic entry vest
 - c. Duty belt for tactical equipment
 - d. Special weapons as authorized
 - e. Appropriate amount of ammunition for weapons training and qualification:
 1. SRT Team members will utilize appropriate utility type uniforms, of an approved color/pattern. Except when otherwise authorized by the SRT Commander, uniforms will utilize clearly visible and identifiable placards, patches, badges, or lettering that identifies the wearer of the uniform as a law enforcement officer. All other items of personal wear or equipment must be approved by the SRT Team Commander.
 2. SRT Team members are responsible for the care and maintenance of the equipment which is issued to them. No modifications or repair of any assigned equipment will be made without the authorization of the SRT Team Commander. All modifications and repairs will be in accordance with corresponding Sheriff's Office Policies and Procedures.

K. Special Equipment

1. Recognizing that the missions of the SRT Team are performed in a hazardous environment and recognizing that the safety of innocent citizens, officers, and suspects are often jeopardized by these hazardous conditions, the SRT Team shall utilize special equipment. The special equipment will include, but is not limited to the following:

- a. **PRIMARY ENTRY WEAPONS:** Handguns, select fire weapons, shotguns, and rifles, which are capable of providing the SRT Team with accurate and adequate firepower.
 - b. **HIGH CALIBER RIFLES:** Selected rifles which allow SRT team members to make highly accurate shots from relative distances.
 - c. **LESS LETHAL WEAPONS OR AMMUNITION:** Weapons or ammunition which propel a projectile or device that is not normally lethal in nature.
 - d. **FLASH/NOISE DIVERSIONARY DEVICES:** Devices which are designed to provide a distraction effect.
 - e. **BREACHING TOOLS AND AMMUNITION:** Items such as rams, pry bars, hydraulic or electronic machines, special frangible shotgun rounds, etc. which are designed to force entry into barricaded or secured areas.
 - f. **EXPLOSIVES:** Tactical explosives used to force entry into barricaded or secured areas, or to create an entry point for tactical teams where appropriate speed and surprise can only be accomplished through the use of the explosive. Also used to create large exterior distractions.
 - 2. The SRT Team Commander and designated team leaders will ensure that only those team members properly trained and certified in the use of the special equipment will utilize the equipment. The SRT Team Commander will be responsible for establishing the certification standards and criteria for the team.
- L. Documentation of Activation
- 1. The SRT Team Commander will cause an agency operations plan to be generated detailing the activation and use of the team. This report will be a standard case report type document which details the operation and pertinent information required for follow-up investigators, prosecutors, etc.
- M. After Action Critique/Report
- 1. At the completion of all operations and significant training events the SRT Team Commander will conduct an after action review. The purpose of this review will be to create a forum for team members to offer information for the improvement of the team. The after action review will be formatted to develop the following information: positive factors, negative factors, solutions for the negative factors.
- N. Negotiators
- 1. Selection Criteria
 - a. Openings for SRT Negotiator will be posted by SRT Commander.
 - 1. Applicants must be currently assigned to a law enforcement operational unit within the Sheriff's Office.
 - 2. Applicants must be off probation and have a minimum of two years of law enforcement experience.
 - 3. Any disciplinary action taken against an applicant will be reviewed by the SRT Team commander prior to acceptance of application.
 - b. Applicants will be selected through a review board process and subject to approval of the SRT commander. Factors that will be considered, all or partial, are:
 - 1. Introduction letter
 - 2. Oral interview
 - 3. Evaluation and rating of training and experience
 - 4. Quality of work and/or length of service
 - 5. Background investigation

6. Polygraph examination
 7. Substance screening
 8. Other criteria that have been determined to be a fair and impartial measure of an applicant's ability to perform the duties associated with the SRT Team negotiator.
 2. Negotiator Equipment
 - a. Negotiator equipment is assigned to all negotiators for use in response to a call-out. Equipment includes, but is not limited to:
 1. Emergency lights and sirens
 2. Portable Radio
 3. Training
 - a. Eight hour negotiator training is conducted quarterly, generally on the second or fourth Thursdays of the month.
- O. Policy Review
1. The SRT Team Commander will review and, when necessary, update this standard operating procedure biennially.

DEFINITIONS

BARRICADED PERSON – A person who has confined him/herself to avoid apprehension and there is reason to believe that he/she is capable of causing great bodily harm to themselves or others.

HOSTAGE NEGOTIATOR – A sworn member who is specially trained and assigned to perform negotiation functions.

HOSTAGE SITUATIONS – When one or more persons are being held against their will using actual or implied force. The situation may be the result of a crime, domestic problem, or attempted suicide.

SPECIAL RESPONSE TEAM (SRT) – A specially trained team used in high-risk situations and/or difficult or emergency scenarios.

SPECIAL RESPONSE TEAM COMMANDER – The rank of Captain or above is responsible for the coordination of selection, training, deployment, and tactical operations involving the Special Response Team.

REFERENCES

State/Federal Regulations:

None

CFA:

CFA Standards 17.04M, 17.05M, and 17.06M

Forms:

None

Other Policy/ Procedure References:

None

